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30 July 1985

NOTE FOR: Information Systems Board Members

FROM: [ ]   25X1
            Executive Secretary

SUBJECT: Summary of Workstation Issues

        1. [ ] Development Manager for IBM's 3270 personal   25X1
computer (PC), will brief the Board at 1530 hours on Friday, 2 August, in
Room 7D32, Hdqs. He will discuss IBM's future plans for the 3270 PC and
AT, including:

        -- 3270 PC compatibility (Will the 3270 series be able to run all
            the software for the IBM PC?),

        -- additional memory (The "DOS" operating system now limits memory
            in both the 3270 PC and AT.), and

        -- cooperative processing (When PCs are tied to mainframes, which
            one does what computing?).

The Executive Director suggested this brief recap of what we have learned
so far. (U)

        2. The Board's involvement in the workstation/terminal issue began
with the Workstation Environment Working Group's first report in November
1983. That report outlined the split path automation was taking at the
Agency -- Delta Datas for data processing and Wangs for word processing
-- and recommended that both functions be combined in a single
workstation -- a PC. The Working Group did not provide data on the
requirements for or ramifications of such a move, however, and the Board
asked OIT to conduct such a study. That study, [ ] was   25X1
briefed to the Board last March. It also supported the use of PCs and
further recommended that we use industry standard hardware, software, and
protocols. A user survey conducted jointly by OIT and OMS, with the
participation of the Working Group, also supported a general need for
personal computing capabilities. (C)

        3. Simultaneous with these events, OIT was putting together a
modernization effort -- the "Network Environment and Workstation (NEWS)"
program -- which they briefed to the Board in January. The OIT
recommendation, supported by the Board, will change our communications
from teletype (TTY) to industry standard 3270 and will install a "family
of terminals" chosen from industry standard or compatible PCs. (C)

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4. At the same time other efforts have been underway to study the benefits of advanced personal computers (called workstations) and powerful software. The NPIC Upgrade, for example, has chosen large screen, high resolution ☐ workstations and is building software that will permit photo analysts to merge text and imagery, to access large, automated data bases, and to communicate readily between analysts. In the DDI, the ASG's ☐ project equipped the Life Sciences Branch of OSWR with similar workstations running a powerful new software called Smalltalk. In June, ASG briefed the Board on Smalltalk and the Board toured the OSWR branch. Also in June, ☐ demonstrated their workstations, and discussed the variety of "off-the-shelf" software packages available ☐ and the possibility of running the Smalltalk software on it. The Board learned that these more powerful "beasts" ☐ can communicate in virtually any mode and in some cases several modes (TTY and 3270, for example) at the same time, making them well suited to a changing communication environment such as ours. Most are also capable of running Artificial Intelligence programs. Unfortunately, these more powerful devices cost two to four times more than a standard PC. (C)

5. The "family of terminals" concept assumes that not all Agency users should have the same device since some will need more and some less "personal processing" power. A range of devices from just one vendor would be best, but no single vendor seems to have everything. At Friday's briefing we will learn about ☐ plans for the future and what they can offer in the way of a "family". There may not be enough time at this Board meeting to discuss the Optical Disk Task Force report which was sent to you earlier this week. It will be taken up at a future meeting. (U).

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Distribution:
  Orig - PS
    1 - D/Compt
    1 - D/OIT
    1 - D/OC
    1 - D/OD&E
    1 - D/OCR
    1 - C/IMS
    1 - C/ASG
    1 - ER

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